# NORMA at AMRON

*by*

Missionary Emil F. Hannemann

Published by
The Mission Auxiliary of the American Lutheran Church
423 Plum St., Fort Collins, Colorado

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Price, 15c

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

# INTRODUCTION

The title, "Norma at Amron," grew out of the observation that Amron spelled backwards results in the Latin word *norma* (rule). Accordingly, "Norma at Amron" is not to be the story of a girl named Norma, but rather the thrilling account of a normal training school in the jungle of New Guinea where a *norma* of life new to the brown-skinned natives is taught to the end that they may go forth from Amron to teach the new *norma* of life to their fellow natives who still live under the old rule of paganism.

The author, Rev. Emil Hannemann, a native of Ramona, South Dakota, received his education at Eureka Academy, Wartburg College, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Livingston College in London, England, and at the University of Chicago. He is a veteran of World War I, having served with the A.E.F. in France.

In 1923 he went to New Guinea as one of our early missionaries, arriving at Madang December 30, 1923. For two decades he dedicated his life to the theme "New Guinea for Christ," and from his rich experience he writes "Norma at Amron."

—Publisher.

## BUILDING AMRON CENTRAL SCHOOL*

It was fortunate that there were 367 hectares of Crown land at Amron, seven miles northwest of Madang, which the Australian Government was willing to sell to the Mission in 1933. At Amron the two former teachers' training schools, situated at Amele and Urit, Karakar Island, respectively, were united. Instead of perpetuating two languages as church and school languages, namely, a Papuan or inland language and a Melanesian or coastal language, the Field Conference of Lutheran Mission Madang decided in 1932 to introduce the Graged language as the *lingua franca* of the Mission. Graged became the medium of instruction at Amron in November 1934 when the school began to operate.

**Schools Merged**

Amron was hewn out of the bush. Mr. Victor Koschade, a lay missionary on our staff, was assigned to do some preliminary exploratory work and make suggestions as to a possible station site. After he had made a tentative selection the members of the executive committee and others of the staff went to look at the location. There really was no alternative choice since the place chosen included the highest range of connected hillocks with the adjoining spurs, the highest point being 320 feet above sea level. There is a surprising difference between this altitude and the altitude at Madang which is about 10 feet above the sea's surface. At Amron we never sleep without a coverlet. All winds, nature's electric fan, strike us here. At Madang it frequently does not cool off until after midnight.

**Site for New School Chosen**

In the beginning we were almost forced to denude the station grounds of all wild trees to make room for ornamental trees, fruit

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*It should be stated that building Amron Central School was not the work of one man. The author wishes to acknowledge the services of Mr. Wm. Siemers as carpenter, Mr. Walter Krebs as printer and Rev. J. F. Mager as fellow faculty member.

trees and for some coconut palms. But in planting we had to be careful not to smother ourselves in trees. We wished to keep our view open to the hills in the west, to the magnificent view of the mighty Finisterre Range across the Astrolabe Bay and to the wide expanse of the Pacific to the east. We wanted to be able to see Madang harbor and the ships that came and went.

The numerous streamlets on our hillsides are hardly ever all dry. After every heavy rain one hears the music of running water from every direction. These streams supply the pupils with water for drinking, cooking, washing and bathing. And there is a cascade near by which some day may be utilized for power and light.

As our township gradually emerged from the jungle, the snakes which visited our temporary chicken house so frequently in the beginning felt themselves betrayed and became fewer and fewer. But chicken hawks enjoyed the improvements of civilized man. Most shamelessly they made daily and sometimes even hourly inspection of the clearing and enjoyed adding chicks to their daily dietary. Stealthily, at times, even an iguana risked traveling to the top of the hill to spy out a chicken.

As school was scheduled to start no later than October 1934, there was no time to lose. The seven major congregations of our Mission had been encouraged some months before to plant food for the oncoming pupils. Some congregations had done fairly well, but there was not nearly enough food in the beginning to support the boys. The school had to assist a bit with rice. When the boys carried it up from Nagada we had no place to put it except the spare bedroom in our temporary sheet metal house. My wife had washed clothes that day and had put the dry laundry in the same room for the night. The half inch white worms must have preferred the clean clothes to the rice, for there were thousands of these rice worms in the clothes the next day—which turned out to be another wash day. We had to find a different place for the rice to keep the worms from migrating all over the house,

**Food Problems**

possibly even to our beds. Even such rice was still too precious to throw away. The congregations, however, sent food whenever the Totol called near their villages. How gladly the boys went down to Nagada to carry up this food from home—yams, taro, bananas, galip nuts, betelnuts--brought by the mission boat.

As soon as possible a new crop was planted at Amron. The station grounds which had been cut and burned by October seemed to beckon for a planting. The yams yielded well on our future campus.

Before the first class actually commenced work at school there were many jobs to be done. There was, for instance, lumber for the Amron house to be transported up the hill from Nagada.

**Building Problems**

Should it be carried those two miles on the shoulders of boys? Was there not a better way? We'd use the old Dodge truck at Nagada and haul the lumber at least to the foot of our station hill. But how could we get across the Tuiba River on Nagada plantation?

*A view of Amron, New Guinea*

A bridge would have to be built. Fortunately, the Mission's bridge and wharf builder, Mr. Jack Lindner from South Australia, was working at Nagada at that time. He volunteered to supervise the work. While Missionary Emil Hannemann, the author, hauled dirt and rocks with an "advanced patrol" of Kekn pupils, Mr. Lindner controlled the unloading, building a dam about 12 feet wide in from the shallow side of the river. The sides of the dam were encased in coral rocks, the center filled with dirt. The last 18 feet were spanned by a plank bridge with a house over it to protect the structure from the rain and the sun.

As soon as the bridge was done the old Dodge went across with supplies for Amron house. How the old truck had to be raced over the level ground to make it climb a long, low hill near the last steep rise where we had to unload. If the old machine did not quite make it the first time, the driver just let it roll backward to take a fresh start.

The only thing wrong with the lumber we were hauling was that it had not had time to season. Pressure was upon us. Two dwellings had to be built in a hurry. Also the lumber which was cut right at Amron had to be used before it was dry. A printery had to be built, also a boys' house for native contract laborers, a store-house, a snake-proof chicken house and a milking shed.

As school houses we used a bush house which Mr. Koschade's contract boys had built for me and in which I slept for a few weeks before my wife joined me at Amron. In addition to that the pupils built another bush structure which served as a school room for several years. The pupils' houses were built either by the pupils or by the pupils in conjunction with some of their relatives who came to Amron to help them. What helped a great deal was that congregations close by, such as Nobonob and Graged, had sent men before school started to erect two houses.

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## BUILDING A NEW STUDENT BODY

During the process of the birth of Amron Central School we had splendid opportunities to learn to know native boys. Here at Amron something new was taking place. Formerly the inland boys went to their school at Amele, whereas the coastal and island boys attended at Karakar. At Amron they all met, including groups of boys from sections recently opened by the Mission as well as exchange students from Lutheran Mission Finschhafen. There were Christian and pagan boys, boys in various stages of Christianity, boys with different cultural backgrounds and languages. It was impossible not to have some difficulties and misunderstandings in the beginning. It is still a source of great gratitude to us that the Lord helped us over that first period of station warming.

**Merger Problems**

A group of Keku boys came about a month after school had started. They appeared to be happy about their new work. The fathers and male relatives of some of them had accompanied the boys to Amron. Since there was no house for these boys, a shelter formerly used by contract laborers had to be assigned to them temporarily. This house was at the foot of Amron hill, about a four minutes' walk from the station.

**The Keku Truants**

The fathers and relatives left the following day. School was in session. The new boys from Keku were all present the first morning. But where were they the following day? Why did they clear out so early in the morning? Ah, dear reader, paganism is sloughed off only gradually. We perhaps expect too much if we think that the Papuans ought to be perfect Christians immediately after they are baptized. Some of those boys were not even baptized. A long time later, when I visited at Keku, I found out why the Keku boys left so secretly and fast. They had overheard their fathers and male relatives speak about hostilities which used to

exist between some of their villages and the former occupants of Amron bush. An eery feeling, therefore, came over the boys when they were alone. They slept fitfully. Some time after midnight one of the boys looked out between the slats of which the walls were made. His excited imagination caused him to see a big black form with a long knife. Was this a local spirit warning the grandsons of the men whose guilt had not been condoned? What else could it be? A mere whisper was understood by all. Silently they gathered their belongings and left while they were still all alive.

To really occupy Amron for the Lord of life and death, it seemed deaths were necessary. Never will I forget the first death. It was a boy from Nobonob who died. He had contracted double pneumonia. Since we had no station hospital as yet, we had him in one of the rooms on the ground floor of our house. He died in spite of all our care.

## How one Death Threatened Amron's Existence

Kui, a heathen relative of the boy, and Gazup, a pagan-minded fellow from the Morobe District,* who had worked on a plantation near Madang and had married the deceased boy's sister, decided to make trouble for the school.

The Morobe man threatened, "My sanggumaf or avenging spirit will shortly appear in this bush." What Gazup and Kui decided was to settle the matter concerning this death according to old heathen customs, the "death for a death" principle, since they believed that the boy had been bewitched by some of the other school boys at Amron.

About a week or so later, Sembengo, one of the Keku boys, came running to the station all out of breath and sweating. He

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*The Mandate of New Guinea Territory is divided into three districts on the mainland: the Madang District in the center, the Sepik District to the northwest, and the Morobe District southeast of Madang.

†The natives formerly believed that this spirit could assume the form of various animals.

*The first school house at Amron. The author is at the right and Rev. Harry Dott, who was at Amron to study the Graged Language, is at the left*

*One of the school buildings at Amron*

reported that Kui approached him secretly under cover of the underbrush and jungle growth and tried to kill him with an ax. Only his fast legs saved his life.

The same week three other boys said that somebody entered their house at night, climbed up their slanting plank ladder, ran one of his hands under the head of a sleeper and lifted his ax with the other to strike. A ringing yell from one of the boys in the house caused him to desist, jump down and run.

Many of the pupils became frightened and wanted to leave. Only the promise of quick and drastic action induced them to stay. The congregation elders, including many *luluais* and *tultuls*,‡ of the surrounding communities were immediately called and asked to settle the matter. One of the *tultuls* presided. The culprits, Gazup and Kui, tried to lie out of it by saying that Sembengo, no doubt, mistook someone else for Kui. But not only Sembengo was sure of himself, but numerous pupils had seen Kui on the premises at various times.

The *luluais* and *tultuls* as well as the congregation elders did not wish to take the case to the government court. Such a step, they said, might start a vicious circle of reprisals. Instead they took the two into an open space and lectured them. They were warned, "Don't ever try these stunts again. We are not going to report you this time, but look out! If our boys here at Amron complain to us once more, we will report to the government. Instead of causing trouble and breaking up the school we now ask you to help the boys feel at home. Associate with the pupils freely so they will not fear you anymore."

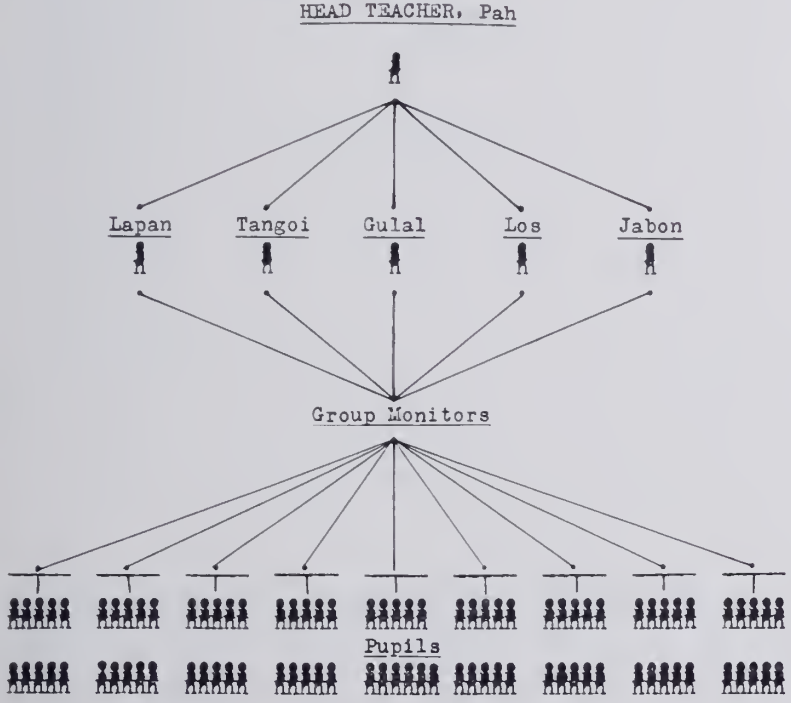
All the pupils were present when this discussion was conducted and they were satisfied. Not a word was heard about this interlude again.

The various groups of boys at the school gradually came closer together. Many inter-tribal friendships developed. One could observe the development of an *esprit de corps* of the

‡Native government officials.

**Student Body Organization**

school. From the start the boys were organized to take care of their own affairs as much as possible. A head overseer was elected once a year from among the six native teachers: Los and Jabon from Graged, Tangoi and Lapan from Karakar, Pah from Nobonob and Gulal from Amele. The five not elected served as the head teacher's assistants. The boys from each community had a monitor chosen by themselves. A few of the larger communities had two. Each monitor led in settling minor difficulties within his own group. For example, if one of the boys from his community was discouraged and became disinterested and lazy, or if a certain boy was neglecting the work in his



garden, or if a pupil had heard about some difficulty in his family in the village, his mates under the leadership of the monitor would try to help him.

Problems affecting all groups, such as theft and slander, were handled by the pupil-body as a whole. The groups were free to ask the head teacher and his five assistants to attend their meeting. If the teachers were not invited the group leaders appointed someone to preside over the meeting.

Only the most difficult things were brought to the missionary in charge of the boys. Indeed, the periodic convocations presented ample opportunity for stimulation and guidance.

To prevent clannishness from persisting, the boys at Amron were mixed: if there were six boys in a house the group might consist of a Graged, two Nobonobs, one Karakar and two Rai Coast pupils. These boys then named one of their number as head of the house.

Although the married pupils and teachers lived in a house of their own, still most of them had two or three boys living with them.

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## LIFE ON THE AMRON CAMPUS

THE SCHOOL YEAR runs from the first of October to about the first week in August. Classes are held six days a week from 6:30 until 11:00 o'clock in the morning. The day starts at 6:00 o'clock with morning devotions conducted by one of the teachers or by a pupil of the upper class. During these short, daily worship periods it is noticeable that the Papuans pray more diligently for the Christians in America and other countries than most church members perhaps do for them.

**The Amron Day**

The afternoons are devoted to practical work. Three, and if necessary, four afternoons a week the boys devote to their garden work. The time which is not spent in the gardens is used to repair houses, build new ones, improve paths on the station, cut grass and similar tasks.

While the boys from the same community are assigned to different houses, they like to cook together. It makes cooking and eating more interesting if the boys from the same locality pool their food and take turns at cooking. For a boy from the Bunabun inland, for example, to cook for a Bilibil lad would not be easy because of different tastes and different ways of handling food.

The greatest food problem at a boys' school in New Guinea is meat. Even in native villages pork is not an item of the weekly dietary. Most pork is still served in connection with special occasions. Coastal people have the advantage of the sea with its supply of fish, shellfish and oysters. Since Amron is some distance inland from the coast, pupils have to wait until Saturday or Sunday afternoon to go fishing down at the beach which borders Nagada plantation on two sides. Bandicoot hunting by torchlight in coconut groves receives quite a bit of attention. Anything edible in the line of meat is used. We have had pupils at Amron

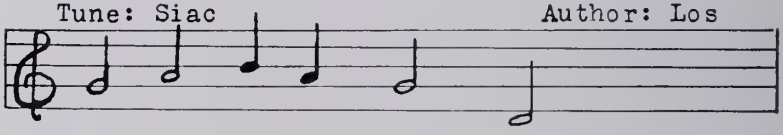
**How Food is Provided**

who had, in their pre-school days, eaten human flesh. Dog meat may be out of date, but not so snake steaks.

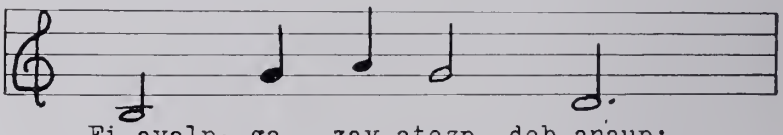
Los of Graged, one of the native teachers at Amron, wrote a nature song which expresses of what the Papuans think in terms of meat.

TEZEGAU INAN KANAM
( Hunting Song )

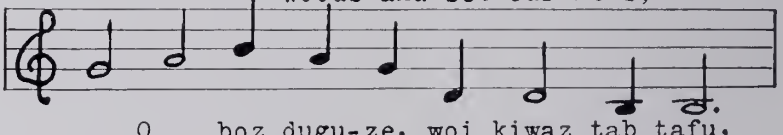
Tune: Siac Author: Los



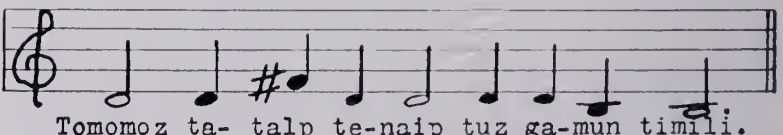
1. O ai a - mais jumi isa,
O boys, arise, rejoice,



Fi ayalp, ga - zay atozp, dob anaup;
Take bow and arrows, let's go to the
woods and set our nets;



O boz dugu-ze, woi kiwaz tab tafu,
O wild pigs, wallabies, cassowaries
let's catch, kill,



Tomomoz ta- talp te-naip tuz ga-mun timili.
Roast, carve, cook, good tasting broth let's
drink.

2. O mas mai manin salei ibolge
*O the sea, too, quiet without a ripple*
Ij funfun dilog;
*Fish multiform swimming about;*
Ai *o* fi ayalp adup atui alog atoz.
*O boys, grasp your weapons, go out, dive, swim,*
Ij lasiy ta ayalp anay gamun tani.
*Shellfish catch, palatable food let's eat.*

3. O ma funfun gazay fuang ileg ien,
*O birds diverse fill the forest, are there in store,*
Nadin babey imais;
*Their calls arise:*
O ugel, malau, sieu, bog duguze, bun melabo mai,—
*O crown-pigeons, bush fowl, hornbills, eagles, pigeons and flying foxes,—*
Ai fi ayalp penadin tomomoz tunnayan.
*Boys, grab your bows, shoot them, let's roast and eat.*

4. O san ien, tidom fulei malan
*O the dry season is here, at night the moon's face*
Po ibolg ien;
*Clear is there;*
O yeu damoi mug dimais, disisu, dunua, ditoz.
*O bandicoots, cuscus are already abroad, they jump, they feed and walk around,*
Ai, fi atoz apau afup tenaiwoi.
*Boys, hunt with bows, tie, slay, let's cook.*

To provide a basic and sure supply of meat the school started to raise pigs immediately in 1934. But several years of experience taught us that communal ownership and feeding of pigs does not work very well. The pupils preferred group* or private owner-

*Group ownership in the sense of local or tribal groups in contrast to the whole student body.

ship. In that way better care is taken of the pigs than if certain boys are appointed to take care of the swine of the whole school community.

No matter whether pigs are communally or privately owned, there is still the problem of either letting the pigs run according to native custom and letting them forage for at least half their food† or of penning them up and feeding them entirely. The latter practice was followed during the last few years of the writer's time at Amron. Boys from the same village or locality owned the pigs, kept them in enclosures and fed them. Much persuasion was neeessary to get certain key boys to try out the latter method. The underlying aim of putting so much time into the pig industry is to teach natives to cure and smoke meat for later use instead of eating the whole pig in one day.

Our gardens contain taro, yams, sweet potatoes, bananas, corn, beans, pumpkins, greens, native fruits, pineapples, and other things. Most natives are accustomed to plant only one crop between August and October and they rely, then, on what is left in the garden from the previous year's planting. Usually this is not very much; the natives, therefore, have an annual *mou saen* or hunger period. At Amron the pupils were constantly encouraged to plant a new plot of taro or sweet potatoes about every four weeks. With an occasional shower, even during the dry season, such periodic planting gave the boys who followed the suggestion plenty of food the year around.

Besides taking care of their own needs the pupils frequently had fieldfruits to sell. With them they traded for matches, kerosene, salt, pencils, slate pencils, note books, razor blades and many other things. Sometimes they asked for cash. This trade helped the white personnel too, inasmuch as we did not always have to feed our contract boys imported rice.

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†To get the pigs to come home and remain tame the natives cook inferior bananas, green pawpaws, taro peels, and the like, at least once a day for their pigs.

June is the month when bush is cut for the new gardens. Since this work involves the cutting of large trees in primary forest, the native teachers advise that in this instance the boys be grouped in language units. Otherwise it can happen that one boy does not understand the warning shout of another when a tree is falling. A Nobonob, for example, might forget himself in the excitement of impending danger and shout in his own language a warning which the other boy would not understand.

## When the Wrong Language Meant Death

We had an example of this kind in 1938. Walok from Medize, Rai Coast, told some of the Nobonob boys who were cutting trees for Gulal, the Amele teacher at Amron, that he would help them. Gulal told him not to help because it was against the rules of the school and because he did not understand Nobonob, the language which the Nobonob boys would be using most of the time while they were at work. But Walok went in spite of the warning. That afternoon Walok and a Nobonob boy were on top of a ten foot platform which they had built around the trunk of the tree and from which they chopped at the trunk with their axes. The day before another tree had been cut, but in falling it leaned against a nearby tree. Now the wind caught this tree, and a Nobonob boy on the ground, seeing it swing into the path of the workers, shouted a warning in Nobonob. Both boys on the platform jumped, but Walok didn't know why he was jumping because he didn't understand Nobonob. If he had understood the warning he would not have jumped right into the path of the falling tree. A large limb struck him in the back. The boys carried him to the station, but he died within the hour. Although he died in faith and confidence in the Lord Jesus, we all felt sorry for this fine boy's untimely death.

At school as well as at any mission station, many things happen and some things must be done which, for the moment, may not always be very pleasant. In the early days at Amron it

### When Necessity was the Mother of Invention

happened that some fresh cows were needed on the station. Mr. Berthold Jaeschke, who was taking care of Nagada plantation at that time, was asked to tame a few of the plantation cows for us. In a week or so we were told to come for a Zebu cow. We sent two boys down to get her. When the boys had not returned by evening we began to inquire about their delayed arrival. A messenger came to tell us that the cow lay down at the foot of our hill and would not get up again. After I had gone down and tried all my techniques on the stubborn animal without results, some school boys suggested carrying her up the hill. They quickly made a stretcher to fit the cow, rolled her onto their contrivance, tied her securely with bushrope, lifted the stretcher to their shoulders and carried her up the hill. They did it with singing and shouting while one of the boys beat their marching rhythm on an empty kerosene tin. The thought was inevitable: may all the boys who take part in this triumphal march triumph in like manner over all stubbornness to which human nature is heir.

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The curricula as they applied from 1934 until 1942 will show what was taught at our Amron Central School.

It is self-evident that reading and writing are very necessary tools for all work at a school. A knowledge of arithmetic is necessary for acculturative purposes. In accommodating themselves to the white people and their legal, economic, commercial and Christian institutions, natives require practical arithmetic. The *taimon, azugeu, tolgeu, palgeu, niman dayan itau, niman azuazu, niman azuan nieu azuazu tikun azugeu*, meaning, the little finger, the ring finger, the forefinger, the index finger (1, 2, 3, 4), and the thumb (5), flexed as they are counted in, two hands two feet and two fingers or 22, is hardly adequate in dealing with whites. Many whites prefer to deal with ignorant natives, but many natives desire to make their sales intelligently. The pupils at Amron could be ranged in an ascending scale. Their interest in practical arithmetic, weights and measures, scale, money, interest accruing on money deposited in a bank savings account, varied around 1940 according to the duration and intensity of their contact with white men, the boys near Madang showing the greatest interest, and those from the distant and most untouched parts of the country showing the least interest.

**Subjects Taught Aim to Lift Natives Out of Paganism**

Missionaries, of course, have gone to New Guinea chiefly to teach Christ and His way of salvation. But in order to interpret Christianity to the whole man, subjects such as hygiene, physiology, the fundamentals of medicine, biology, physics, geography and similar subjects are necessary. Owing to his pagan beliefs, the Papuan does not always take good care of his body. Because of his fatalistic belief in magic he frequently neglects to nurse the sick properly and to give them the food they need to keep up

SCHEDULE OF AMRON CENTRAL SCHOOL

| Subjects | Number of Hours | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1st Year | 2nd Year | 3rd Year | 4th Year | 5th Year | 6th Year |
| Reading | 6 | 6 | 4 | 2 | | |
| Writing | 6 | 6 | 4 | 2 | | |
| Arithmetic | 4 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Christianity I | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Graged, (lingua franca) | 2 | 2 | | | | |
| Singing | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | |
| Sports (native games) | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Hygiene (personal) | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| Geography | | | 6 | 4 | | |
| English (basic as subject) | | | | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Physics (adapted) | | | | 4 | | |
| Biology (elementary) | | | | | 3 | |
| Physiology, Hygiene, etc. | | | | | 6 | |
| Manual Training (Carving) | | | | | 2 | 2 |
| Practice Teaching (Pupils alternate during last two years | | | | | | |
| Christianity II | | | | | 3 | 2 |
| Church History | | | | | | 6 |
| Botany & Zoology | | | | | | 6 |
| Total number of hours | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 |

their strength. Who would attempt to estimate how many people have died in New Guinea throughout pre-mission days owing to such neglect. They say, "He is bewitched; if we cannot counteract the magic by finding the sorceror, the best of care would not avail." So the sick were generally neglected as far as food and bodily care were concerned.

Magical and animistic ideas are perhaps among the last things to be put away by a Papuan Christian. Nelei of Bilibil, a pupil at Amron in 1938 nearly bled to death because his schoolmates performed blood-letting on him when he had a severe headache. Instead of bringing him to the dispensary for a good dose of quinine, they shot a miniature arrow, tipped with a tiny flake of glass, up his nostrils by means of a small bow. The belief with reference to headache formerly was that antagonistic soul-substance had gathered at the seat of pain and had to be removed through blood-letting in that part. Some of these superstitious, religio-surgical practices remained even after the Papuans became Christians. Nelei was lying in a prone position with a pool of blood below his face. Energetic first aid, promptly administered, undoubtedly saved his life.

**Pagan Superstitions must be Unlearned**

Christianity has a great deal to teach pagan man about the phenomena of his body. For this reason sports have been emphasized at Amron. God has given man a body. The body is the temporal housing of the soul. The body must be guarded and kept lest it lead the soul into temptation. If there is no wholesome activity and pastime for the body, boredom and sinful recreation will take their places. Hence, every pupil and native teacher at Amron was called upon to cooperate in reviving native modes of recreation adaptable to a Christian way of life, to cooperate with the white teachers in evolving new games in accordance with the genius of the Papuan people and to adapt

**Why Sports Are Taught**

certain European and American games, especially such as are played with a ball.

Elementary science is taught to assist in ridding the Papuans of wrong conceptions and superstitions. As long as the Papuans, despite Christianity and its attendant civilization, believe in magic and live by it, they will be dissatisfied, because they hold that the builders of large steel ships, airplanes and thousands of other marvels of industry ought to show them by what "magic" these things are obtained. Illustrated lessons in physics, chemistry and modern science are designed to help the natives understand the modern world. The Christian faith lends itself toward a stabilization of the Papuan when he understands, for instance, that it is not magic which makes a Diesel motor run, but that it operates according to scientific rules. God deserves the praise for man's achievements in the field of science, for it is God who has given man his intellect.

**What an Understanding of Science Does for the Native**

As far as biology comes into consideration, the people at Madang used to believe that iguanas, snakes, tortoises and crocodiles hatched from the same species of eggs. Since this was their belief, they thought it possible, for instance, that a human mother could give birth to a boy, a girl and a crocodile. Thus human beings were really not superior to animals. What was more, they were related. So the natives paid homage to certain animals, fish or birds. This practice, called totemism, found all over the world, was also found among some of our own ancestors. See Rom. 1:23.

Although a white missionary teacher does not, as a rule, show a great deal of elation over such things, still it is pleasing to observe how pupils learn and correct their former animistic thinking. One day in 1938 Kubong of Graged came to me and said, "Since I have taken geography I no longer believe that the white man's things originate through superior kinds of magic. I know now how your merchandise and your machines are made."

**Education Bears Fruit**

During a session of the night school for the Amron teachers, Tangoi made this statement, "I have recently seen with my own eyes that our white teachers know what they are talking about when they say that only tortoises hatch from tortoise eggs. I have seen it."

Masil, Jabon, Los and others labored to understand physiological concepts correctly in order to find a suitable terminology for the translation of Dr. Braun's work on physiology, hygiene and tropical diseases. Graged speaking boys eagerly wrote articles on practically all phases of New Guinea paganism in order to provide material which might throw light on the past and help the Papuans appreciate Christianity.

How could such an institution such as our Amron Central School address itself one-sidedly to what is commonly called the spiritual side of man? The Papuan man is a unit, a man indivisible: his body and soul, his present hopes and his future needs, all phases of the life which is and which is to come represent a unit. For that reason our Christian school presents knowledge concerning all branches of science which explain the universe and which show where animistic and magical beliefs are false. Withal, we experience the truth of the explanation of third article of the Creed, "I believe that I cannot of my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him." We also learn the truth contained in I Cor. 2:14, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God . . ." Science, illustrated explanations, educational techniques are only tools used to help in teaching Christ to the natives.

**Geography Dispels Mystery**

Geography means much to us, but it means even more to the Papuans. Formerly the Finisterre Mountains southeast of Madang, some of the Bismarck Mountains visible south of Madang and the low mountains extending westward toward the mouth of the Ramu River constituted the ends of the earth to the people around Madang. The whites were *tibud* or spirits, not real people. Only the Papuans were real *tamol*, men,

in the generic sense. The natives at Karakar identified Missionary George and his wife and Missionary Eckershoff with some of their dead ancestors. Mrs. Eckershoff did not fit into the picture because she was stouter than the native ancestral counterpart. Upon the missionaries' arrival at Karakar the natives assigned coconut and betelnut palms to them, telling them that those were the trees their ancestors planted.

When the white people began to alienate land from the natives and started to plant coconuts, tobacco, rubber, cocoa, coffee, sisal and various other plants, the natives said, "The *tibud* must not have good land for planting, otherwise they would not have come here."

From this you can see how necessary it is to teach geography in a Christian school in New Guinea. The following incident will even more clearly show the need for geography.

Kaidong, a pupil from Karakar, came to me one day in 1940 and pointed to Matthew 6:33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

"I have come to school," he said, "to seek God's kingdom. When will God give me all the other things of which this word speaks?"

In his case geography had not fulfilled its full mission. Kaidong has seen the world pass by when he had geography, but to his way of thinking, he was not getting his share of the world's goods. God, he thought, ought to see to it that he received more.

I interpreted the passage to him in this way: "Isn't God giving you anything to eat? Do you have to go hungry? Doesn't God give rain, sunshine and favorable weather for your garden?"

"Yes."

"Don't you have the tools to work with, a knife, an ax, a hoe?"

The lad was compelled to answer again in the affirmative.

I continued the questioning, "Don't you have a house which shelters you against rain, wind and sun? Don't you have a blanket with which to cover yourself at night?"

Once more I heard him say, "Yes."

Unrelentingly, I went on, "Don't you have a lamp and kerosene for light at night and also some surplus fieldfruits which you sell for money with which you buy the things you like to have?"

His "Yes" sounded as if it were becoming a habit.

I had to clinch the argument. "Don't you have your family, your parents, your sisters, brothers and clan members who are interested in you and assist you in every way while you are at school? Don't you have a chance to go to school? And don't you have the necessary things to do your work at school, books, paper, ruler, eraser, pencil and a slate?"

To this long inquiry the lad was led to reply, "Yes."

I ended the interview by saying, "Those are the things which God gives you quite abundantly out of fatherly goodness. Think of these things which God gives you daily and thank Him for them. And while you do that, keep on seeking the kingdom of God."

During pre-mission days the Papuans lived, moved and had their being in their animistic religion. Also their arts, their sculpturing, carving, painting, poetry and singing, they conceived in the light of their beliefs. When a Papuan and his clansmen are converted to God through the Holy Spirit all things within them and around them are made new. However, the identity of the Papuan is not destroyed in the process. They keep their chocolate-brown skin, their kinky hair, their language, their native foods, their houses of thatch and many of their ancient customs. Papuan Christians express their Christianity through forms which are natural to them. They use their own language and imagery, their own architecture, art forms, carving and painting, their own Christian compositions and tunes, their own way of giving an address, and they conduct meetings in their own way. Ethnologically minded missionaries do not want to make a white man of the native. To be Christian it is not necessary to be dressed like a white man, to sit on chairs and eat from tables and earthenware dishes, and to insist, like many white men

**Papuan Identity Preserved**

do, that sermons be no longer than twenty minutes. We encourage a type of Christianity in keeping with the identity of the Papuan natives. With kindly encouragement we believe the native Christians of New Guinea will make a worthwhile contribution to world-wide Christianity. Amron wishes to help in this work of glorifying Christ for the salvation of Papuan souls.

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## CONCLUSION

This presentation has been a sketchy description of the growth, work and aspirations of Amron Central School—the school that was. During World War II the entire school plant was destroyed. But the Lord, I am sure, would have us build it again. Shall we say Him "Nay?"

If you are interested in Christian Higher Education for the natives of New Guinea—and all true and devoted Christians ought to be—you may have an opportunity of lending your personal support to the new school that will surely be erected in Amron's place. The Mission Auxiliary of the American Lutheran Church sponsors Class Scholarships* which are necessary to rebuild and maintain the new Amron Central School in New Guinea as an institution for training native teachers and evangelists. We commend these Class Scholarships for your prayerful support.

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*Those interested in Class Scholarships may have further information by writing *Mission Auxiliary*, Rev. C. Taubert, 423 Plum St., Ft. Collins, Colorado.

Printed in U. S. A. by
WARTBURG PRESS
57 E. Main Street
Columbus 15, Ohio